

REMARKS OF THE
HONORABLE HENRY A. WAXMAN
ON THE
ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED HEALTH BUDGET CUTS
FEBRUARY 4, 1982

THE PRESIDENT'S FY 1983 BUDGET SLASHES MORE THAN \$5 BILLION FROM OUR NATION'S HEALTH PROGRAMS. WHILE THE FINAL NUMBERS MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY WHEN THEY ACTUALLY SUBMIT THEIR BUDGET, THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CUTS HIGHLIGHT THIS ADMINISTRATION'S REAL PRIORITIES. WE CAN SET ASIDE THEIR RHETORIC ABOUT A SOCIAL SAFETY NET. WE CAN SET ASIDE THEIR RHETORIC ABOUT COMPETITION. WE CAN SET ASIDE THEIR RHETORIC ABOUT A NEW FEDERALISM. THE HARSH REALITY IS A \$5 BILLION CUT, ON TOP OF NEARLY \$3 BILLION IN CUTS THAT THEY FORCED THROUGH THE CONGRESS LAST YEAR. THAT CUT IS UNACCEPTABLE -- WE CANNOT AFFORD TO DESTROY OUR NATION'S HEALTH PROGRAMS.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S \$5 BILLION CUT WOULD BE MADE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR SOCIETY -- THE VERY GROUPS THAT THEIR RHETORIC PRETENDS TO HELP.

- O THEY WOULD CUT ABOUT \$2.5 BILLION FROM MEDICARE THROUGH LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY CHANGES. THE RESULT WILL BE THAT THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED WILL PAY MORE AND MORE FOR SERVICES, AND COSTS WILL BE SHIFTED TO OTHER HEALTH INSURERS, STATES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

- O THEY WOULD CUT MORE THAN \$2 BILLION FROM MEDICAID -- SHIFTING THOSE COSTS TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHO ARE STILL REELING FROM THE IMPACT OF LAST YEAR'S CUTS. THE RESULT WILL BE REDUCTIONS IN SERVICES FOR THE POOR, AND HIGHER STATE AND LOCAL TAXES FOR ALL.

- O THEY WOULD NOT CORRECT A SERIOUS SHORTFALL IN LAST YEAR'S BUDGET FOR THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL WHEN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMS WAS CUT BY ONE-THIRD. HEARINGS THAT WE HELD THIS MORNING HIGHLIGHTED THE FACT THAT OVER 2 MILLION CHILDREN WILL NOT RECEIVE VACCINATION AGAINST DISEASES SUCH AS POLIO, TETANUS, AND MEASLES.

- O THEY WOULD TAKE THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) THAT IS CURRENTLY WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE EDUCATION AND LABOR COMMITTEE, AND COMBINE IT WITH THE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES BLOCK GRANT THAT WE DEVELOPED LAST YEAR, THROWING HEALTH AND NUTRITION INTO COMPETITION WITH EACH OTHER. FUNDING WOULD BE CUT BY \$300 MILLION, OR 22 PERCENT BELOW THE FY 1982 LEVEL, BUT EVEN THIS UNDERSTATES THE CUT. THEIR PROPOSAL IS NEARLY \$600 MILLION SHORT OF THE FUNDING REQUIRED TO PAY FOR THE SAME LEVEL OF SERVICES AS THESE PROGRAMS DELIVERED IN 1981.

- O THEY WOULD CONSOLIDATE THE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM INTO AN UNRELATED HEALTH SERVICES BLOCK GRANT. ESSENTIALLY THE SAME PROPOSAL WAS MADE LAST YEAR, AND AFTER A FULL AND THOROUGH DEBATE THE CONGRESS DECIDED TO CONTINUE FUNDING FAMILY PLANNING AS A CATEGORICAL PROGRAM. THIS IS ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO REDUCE THE PROGRAM'S FUNDING AND DESTROY ITS EFFECTIVENESS.

- O THEY WOULD SLASH FUNDS FOR NURSING PROGRAMS. IN FY 1981 THIS WAS FUNDED AT \$80 MILLION. LAST YEAR IT WAS CUT TO \$47 MILLION. NOW IT REDUCED AGAIN DOWN TO \$12 MILLION -- 15 PERCENT OF ITS 1981 LEVEL. THIS WOULD MEAN THAT NO FINANCIAL AID WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS ATTENDING NURSING SCHOOL. AT A TIME WHEN THE NATION IS EXPERIENCING A SEVERE SHORTAGE OF NURSES, AND NURSING SCHOOL TUITION IS INCREASING, THIS PROPOSAL APPEARS TO BE UNWISE AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

- O THEY WOULD CUT THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. IN FY 1981, THIS WAS FUNDED AT \$63 MILLION. LAST YEAR IT WAS CUT TO \$36 MILLION. NOW THEY PROPOSE FURTHER REDUCTIONS DOWN TO \$11 MILLION IN FY 1983. THIS WOULD ELIMINATE ALL NEW SCHOLARSHIPS. IN FUTURE YEARS, NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS PHYSICIANS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NATION.

IT IS TIME TO CALL A HALT TO THIS ANNUAL BUDGETARY MADNESS. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO USE THEIR DISCREDITED ECONOMIC POLICY AS AN EXCUSE TO DESTROY WORTHWHILE HEALTH PROGRAMS THAT THEY HAVE OPPOSED FOR DECADES.

WE CANNOT AND WILL NOT ALLOW THE AGED, THE CHILDREN, THE POOR, AND THE ILL TO SERVE AS VICTIMS OF THIS ADMINISTRATION'S IDEOLOGY AND BUDGETARY POLICY. WE URGE ALL CONCERNED TO JOIN US IN DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO DEFEAT THIS BUDGET.